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with his buddy, the young writer would have respected his wishes and not felt the need to reveal. The boy wouldn't listen to his parents because he resented their interference. He felt that they were trying to control his life, to take away his freedom. But David was his friend, and maybe he would have listened to him.

These thoughts have been tormenting David since the fatal day that he learned of his friend's death. "He trusted me. Maybe I could have saved him. Maybe I could have done something." The feeling of responsibility that David can't seem to shake is an unbelievably heavy burden for a twenty-one-year old to bear. David knows that no matter what he may have tried, the odds were still strong that it wouldn't have made any difference, but it's that one chance, that squelched glimmer of hope that David can't get out of his mind.

But David is not one to wallow in despair. His father, Jack Cassidy, and his step-mother, Shirley Jones, have instilled in him the qualities of character that it takes to stand up in the face of tragedy. "One thing Dad taught me—Shirley too—was to achieve something, no matter how big or small, with my life," David explains. David is trying not to look back, but to look forward. The pain that he has felt may still be with him, but he has also found something worth fighting for. He may not be a crusader, but he does have a cause.

Since the death of his friend, David has become so deeply concerned about the dangers of drug abuse that he will discuss little else. He knows that he has a tremendous following among teen-agers, that they read the things he says and identify with him. The tragic death of his friend taught him that it is his duty to speak out for what he believes in, to try to influence young people as much as he can if there's a chance that he may save them from making a terrible mistake.

"I think young people really want to change the world," he says. "They hate the war and the violence and the poverty. So they tried to do something, but the war went on, and they felt frustrated. Some just dropped out—or dropped acid! They decided if they couldn't change anything they would try and forget it. But we've got to keep trying. Young people are where it's at. Our lives are too valuable to ruin."

Most kids who are into the drug scene can't see the danger in what they are doing, and this frightens David. "They keep saying drugs aren't harmful, but they're terrible. Either they hurt the guy taking them or his kids later on.

"You wouldn't believe the combinations of pills I've witnessed—really *seen* some guys take. They lose count, they just keep popping them. And I've seen more than just one person I really cared about wrecked by drugs. They start out innocently enough, but pot leads to methadrine and so on and so on.

"They end up on heroin, finally. If it doesn't kill them, then it kills any chance they have of leading a good life."

Some of David's friends have dubbed him "the preacher" because he's started asking questions like, "What are you taking that for?" But David brushes his new nickname aside and goes right on

preaching about the evils of drugs.

"You kids tell me I'm really square because I'm not on speed," he tells his flock. "Well, I'm not square at all! I'm afraid of it. Look, I've seen some great people freak out on the stuff. Go crazy."

"They said they started because life was tough, you know, all the cop-out reasons. Someone had told them that there was an easy way to feel better. That way was to get high and so they popped pills. Maybe one out of every hundred felt better. The rest freaked out!"

While many of his friends are smoking grass and popping pills, David doesn't even drink. "I'm a person who likes to be in control," he says. "I have trouble just keeping it all together and keeping my head when I'm straight."

David feels that his drug-user friends aren't interested in keeping their heads, in fact, they're trying to get as far away from reality as possible. "Some people start looking for escapes as soon as they're old enough to think. Drugs give them a chance, but it's a bad chance. They make you able to forget for a little while. And, man, kids today have a lot of things they'd like to forget. They get rejected in a lot of ways. They can't find work. They come from broken homes. They went to schools that were overcrowded where they couldn't get much attention. Sometimes I feel really lucky, coming from an above average income home with all the luxuries—private schools, the whole bit."

David's luck goes beyond money. Although his parents were divorced when he was very young, he was always treated with a great deal of love and understanding by both his sets of parents. But even more than that, he was treated with respect. "I've been given a lot of freedom to make up my own mind about things," says David, and he feels that this had a lot to do with his decision to refrain from using drugs. He had no need to rebel against his parents' authority because they never tried to impose their authority upon him. "They didn't try to mold me into carbon copies of themselves."

David's first encounter with grass took place when he was twelve. At a party, one of the older kids pulled out a joint and passed it around. He didn't try it because he didn't even know what it was.

"When I went home, I told Dad and Shirley about it. They told me some of the effects of pot, both the bad effects and what were supposed to be the groovy effects. They laid it all out for me. Neither one of them said, 'Dave, don't you ever touch the stuff!' They were really groovy about it, you know."

Because Jack and Shirley were honest with him, David felt no need to spite them. Because he was happy about his home life, and later about his blossoming career, he felt no need to escape from reality. "I like my work, and it gives me a feeling of accomplishment, you know. If I got hooked on drugs, I'd lose everything. Besides, if I'm happy without it, why use it?"

Yes, David has been very lucky. Lucky to be born rich and handsome and talented. Lucky to be surrounded by love and the wisdom that goes along with it.

David's friend was not so lucky. Oh, he had the same advantages that David had,